

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-27 (canceled).

Claim 28 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet comprising a preformed thermoplastic polyurethane body ~~comprising thermoplastic polyurethane pellets~~ and thermally expandable hydrocarbon-containing microspheres, at least the thermoplastic polyurethane body being substantially encapsulated by a binding agent comprising a polyisocyanate or prepolymer thereof having an onset temperature for its melt processing which is lower than the onset temperature for the melt processing range of the thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 29 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 28 wherein said polyurethane is the reaction product of difunctional isocyanate with at least one difunctional polyhydroxy compound.

Claim 30 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 28, further comprising an additional blowing agent.

Claim 31 (currently amended). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane obtained by foaming the foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet of claim 30.

Claim 32 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 28, wherein the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres contain an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon.

Claim 33 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 28, wherein the thermoplastic polyurethane pellets are made by reacting a difunctional isocyanate composition comprising an aromatic difunctional isocyanate with at least one difunctional polyhydroxy compound.

Claim 34 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 33, wherein the aromatic difunctional isocyanate comprises diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 35 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 34, wherein the diphenylmethane diisocyanate comprises at least 80% by weight of 4,4'-diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 36 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 33, wherein the difunctional polyhydroxy compound comprises a polyoxyalkylene diol or polyester diol.

Claim 37 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 36, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol comprises oxyethylene groups.

Claim 38 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 37, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol is a poly(oxyethylene-oxypropylene diol).

Claim 39 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 28, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 0.5 and 4.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 40 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 39, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 1.0 and 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 41 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 30, wherein the blowing agent is an endothermic blowing agent.

Claim 42 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 41, wherein the endothermic blowing agent comprises bicarbonates or citrates.

Claim 43 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 30, wherein the blowing agent is an exothermic blowing agent.

Claim 44 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 43, wherein the exothermic blowing agent comprises azodicarbonamide type compounds.

Claim 45 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 30, wherein the amount of the blowing agent is between 0.5 and 4.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 46 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane pellet according to claim 45, wherein the amount of the blowing agent is between 1.0 and 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 47 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 which is carried out by injection molding.

Claim 48 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 which is carried out in a pressurized mold.

Claim 49 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 having a density not more than 700 kg/m³.

Claim 50 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 having a density of not more than 600 kg/m³.

Claims 51-61 (canceled).